

H. Grattan Guinness

Key to the Apocalypse

*The Seven Interpretations of
Divine Prophecy*



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Key to the Apocalypse: Or, The Seven Interpretations of Symbolic Prophecy

By H. Grattan Guinness, D.D.

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Preface by Lutheran Librarian

In republishing this book, we seek to introduce this author to a new generation of those seeking authentic spirituality.

HENRY GRATTAN GUINNESS (1835-1910) was an Irish Protestant Christian preacher, evangelist and author. He started Harley College, also known as the East London Missionary Training School. A traveling preacher, he drew thousands to hear him during the Ulster Revival of 1859. Rev. Guinness trained and sent hundreds of “faith missionaries” all over the world. [Wikipedia]

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Preface

WHILE COMPLETE in itself as a Key to the Apocalypse, this work is intended to be introductory to a short series of simple expositions of that great prophecy, based on divinely given interpretations of its meaning.

It is an unquestionable fact that the intimately related prophecies of Daniel and John contain seven divinely given interpretations, and it is evident that these must constitute the only infallible basis of exposition. “In building on them,” as we state in chapter 3, “we build not on the shifting sands of human opinion, but on the stable rock of revealed truth. Without such a foundation no interpretation of Daniel and the Apocalypse can be secure and trustworthy, as resting upon divine authority, but can only stand on ‘begged principles and mere human conjectures.’”

The basis on which we build is divine interpretation. The plan of this book is as follows. After a brief introduction the seven divine interpretations are set forth in chapter 3; in chapter 4 the historical fulfillment of the seventh and last of these; and in chapter 5 we use this last interpreted and marvelously fulfilled vision (that in Rev. 17.) as a Key to open the remaining visions in the Apocalypse, “for such is the connection of the various visions in the book, that the opening of its central vision is a manifest clue to the meaning of the whole” (p. 103).

May the Divine Spirit, who “searches all things, yea the deep things of God,” enlighten us to understand these sublime and sacred prophecies, and sanctify us through the knowledge of the Truth.

1. Preliminary Points

I. The Writer Of "the Apocalypse Is The Apostle John

THIS VIEW is amply sustained by primitive testimony. Justin Martyr, who was born about seven years after the banishment of the Apostle John to Patmos, in his dialogue with Trypho thus refers to the author of the Apocalypse: "A man from among us, by name John, one of the Apostles of Christ, in the revelation made to him, has prophesied that the believers in our Christ shall live a thousand years in Jerusalem." Irenaeus, who wrote about thirty years later than Justin Martyr, speaks of the Apocalypse as the work of John, the disciple of the Lord, that same John that leaned on His breast at the Last Supper. Origen, who made the Canon of the New Testament a subject of special enquiry, attributes the authorship of the Apocalypse to the Apostle John, "Who leaned on Jesus' bosom," "who wrote a Gospel, and said that the world itself could not contain the books which tell of the Lord's acts," "he wrote the Apocalypse also." "Herod slew James the brother of John with the sword; and the King of the Romans — as tradition teaches — condemned John, bearing witness for the word of truth, to the Island of Patmos. And John informs us of the things concerning this witness of his, not telling who condemned him, but saying in the Apocalypse: 'I, John, was in the isle that is called Patmos' (1:9)... And he appears to have seen the Revelation in the island."

The writings of the Apostle John relate to the past, the present, and the future of the time in which he lived. He wrote a Gospel concerning the Person of Christ, Epistles concerning His Church, and an Apocalypse concerning His Kingdom. No other writer in the New Testament is of equal range, or more profound or Christ-like.

II. The Date Of The Apocalypse Is That Of The Banishment Of The Apostle John Under The Roman Emperor Domitian Towards The Close Of The First Century

The testimony of Irenaeus, who was Polycarp's disciple, who was himself the disciple of the Apostle John, is of special importance on this point. Speaking of the number of the Beast in the Apocalypse, he says: "For it [the Apocalypse] was seen no very long time ago, but almost in our age, towards the end of the reign of Domitian" (Eusebius, H.E., iii. 18). Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Hippolytus, and others of the early Fathers confirm this testimony. Victorinus, who wrote a commentary on the Apocalypse towards the close of the third century, says twice over that the visions of the Apocalypse were seen by the Apostle John in the Isle of Patmos, when banished thither by the Roman Emperor Domitian. The commentary of Victorinus is the earliest on the Apocalypse extant. Referring to the passage in Rev. 10:11, he writes: "'Thou must again prophesy to the peoples, and to the tongues, and to the nations, and to many kings.' He says this because, when John said these things, he was in the Island of Patmos, condemned to the labor of the mines by Caesar Domitian. There therefore he saw the Apocalypse; and when, at length grown old, he thought that he should receive his quittance by suffering, Domitian being killed, all his judgments were discharged. And John being dismissed from the mines, thus subsequently delivered the same Apocalypse which he had received from God."

The external evidence as to the Domitian date of the Apocalypse is clear and certain. "From the first witness who speaks upon the point in the latter half of the second century down to the first half of the fifth we have a succession of Fathers bearing testimony with one accord, and in language which admits of no misunderstanding, to the fact that St. John was banished to Patmos under the reign of Domitian, and that there he beheld those visions of the Apocalypse which he afterwards committed to writing. These Fathers too are men... of ability, learning, and critical insight into the history of bygone times... They belong to the most different and widespread regions of the Church — to Gaul, Alexandria, the proconsular province of North Africa, Pannonia, Syria, and Rome. They are thus in a great degree

independent of each other, and they convey to us the incontestable impression that for at least the first four centuries of the Christian era, and over the whole extent of the Christian Church, it was firmly believed that St. John had beheld the visions of the Apocalypse in the days of Domitian, and not of Nero.”¹ The date thus assigned by primitive testimony to the Apocalypse is towards the end of A.D. 95 or the beginning of AD. 96.

“The varied historical evidence which has been enquired into,” says Elliott, “all concurs to confirm the date originally and expressly assigned by Irenaeus to the Apocalypse, as seen and written at the close of the reign of Domitian — that is, near the end of the year 95 or beginning of 96. Accordingly the great majority of the most approved ecclesiastical historians and Biblical critics, alike Roman Catholic and Protestant, French, German, and English, — writers who have had no bias on the point in question, one way or the other, from any particular cherished theory of apocalyptic interpretation; for example, Dupin, Bossuet, Tillemont, Le Clerk, Turretin, Spanheim, Basnage, Lampe, Mosheim, Mill, Whitby, Lardner, Milner, Tomline, Burton, etc., etc., — have alike adopted it; to whom I am happy to add the living names of the German ecclesiastical historian Gieseler, and of our own learned chronologist, Mr. Clinton. We may, I am persuaded, depend on its correctness with an unhesitating and implicit confidence as on the truth of almost any of the lesser facts recorded in history. And I must say it seems to me most surprising that respectable and learned commentators should have spent their time and labor in building up apocalyptic expositions that rest wholly and only on the sandy foundation of an earlier Neronic date” (Elliott, *Horae Apocalypticae*, vol. i., pp. 45, 46).

III. The Theme Of The Apocalypse Is Defined In Its Opening Verses

The subject of the Apocalypse, according to its inspired definition, is “things which must shortly come to pass.” The Apocalypse is not a book of history or of doctrine, but of prophecy. To this its larger part is devoted. It treats of things which were future at the date of their revelation, and of things whose accomplishment was “shortly” to come to pass. Their chronological position did not lie in remote futurity. The time of their fulfillment was in the first century “at hand” (1:3). This idea of the speedy accomplishment of its

predictions is again and again referred to throughout the prophecy, and appears at its close in the sentence, “the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show unto His servants the things which must shortly be done” (22:6). The Apocalypse is a revelation not of remote events in which the Christian Church from apostolic days onward to the present time has had no practical interest, but of events which eighteen hundred years ago were near at hand as to the commencement of their accomplishment.

“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.”

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1. *Baird Lecture on the Revelation of St. John* (1885), by Professor Milligan, p. 308, who strongly and ably confirms the Domitian date of the Apocalypse in an extended appendix. ↩

2. Interpretation Of The Apocalypse: Scripture Key To The Subject Of The Prophecy

NO INTERPRETATION of the Apocalypse can be secure and stable but that which is based on divinely given explanations of its symbols and visions. In seeking to understand the prophecy our first question should be, What saith the Scripture? The diligent use of divinely given helps for the interpretation of the symbolic prophecy is the true and only way to its comprehension.

In science and philosophy men followed for many ages a false method of reasoning and research, building their conclusions upon a basis of dogmatic speculation, instead of deducing them from a full collection of well-established facts. In his *Novum Organum*, or, *True Suggestions for the Interpretation of Nature*, Bacon exposed this mistaken method. "The sole cause," says Bacon, "and root of almost every defect in the sciences is this, that while we falsely admire and extol the powers of the human mind we do not search for its real helps." "Speculations and theories of mankind are but a kind of insanity, only there is no one to stand by and observe it." "We must bring men to particulars, and their regular series and order," and make "an instauration from the very foundations, if we do not wish to revolve for ever in a circle, making only some slight and contemptible progress."

An analogous reformation is needed in prophetic interpretation. Abandoning speculation and dogmatism, those who seek to understand symbolic prophecy, and especially the mysterious prophecies of the Apocalypse, should turn to the real helps which God has given to the comprehension of these portions of His Word. The primary key to Scripture is Scripture itself. The gate of entrance to the meaning of symbolic prophecy is divine interpretation. The first duty of the student of prophecy is to listen to that which the revealing Spirit has said as to the meaning of His own mysterious utterances.

The Old Testament Introduction To The Apocalypse

He who would enter the temple of truth must be content to do so by the divinely given door. The Old Testament is certainly the entrance to the New, and in a special manner the Book of Daniel in the Old Testament is the porch or passage leading to the Apocalypse. In his observations on the prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John, Sir Isaac Newton says: "Among the old prophecies Daniel is most distinct in order of time and easiest to be understood, and therefore in those things which relate to the last times he must be made the key to the rest." On the connection of Daniel and Revelation he says: "The Apocalypse of John is written in the same style and language with the prophecies of Daniel, and hath the same relation to them which they have to one another, so that all of them together make but one complete prophecy. The Apocalypse should thus be regarded as the New Testament sequel to the Book of Daniel. The Books of Daniel and Revelation may be considered as parts one and two of a single prophecy — a prophecy relating to the same subject, and presenting that subject in the same symbolic form. They unfold earlier and later portions of the same great story.

The Book of Daniel holds a transitional position in Old Testament Scripture. In it "prophecy ceases to be Jewish and becomes Gentile."¹ It is thus suited to be an introduction to New Testament prophecy relating to the course of Gentile history.

All the events foretold in the Apocalypse belong to that order of things and course of ages predicted in the Book of Daniel. The introductory vision in Daniel, that of the Image, the Stone, and the Mountain, sketches the complete course of the five kingdoms of History and Prophecy, and, like the vault of heaven embracing the extent and circumference of earth, "arches in the entire future of the world with celestial ease and stability. It starts from the time then present, and terminates on the verge of eternity." The grand outline given in this introductory vision is filled in by later prophecies. Each succeeding prophecy adds further details, but no fresh outline is presented. The sublime framework of the five empires remains unaltered. All the visions of the Apocalypse belong to this outline. They cannot be properly understood until they are fitted into it, and take their place in it as part of a

great symbolic revelation concerning the course and succession of earthly empires, and the rise and establishment of the Kingdom of God

1. *Daniel, an Exposition*, by Payne Smith, D.D., p. 1. [↩](#)

3. The Seven Interpretations Of Symbolic Prophecy

THE SYMBOLIC PROPHECIES of Daniel and John contain seven divinely given interpretations of their meaning. These interpretations claim our first attention, and constitute the only infallible basis of exposition. In building on them we build not on the shifting sands of human opinion, but on the stable rock of revealed truth. Without such a foundation no interpretation of Daniel and the Apocalypse can be secure and trustworthy, as resting upon divine authority, but can only stand on “begged principles and mere human conjectures.” The seven divinely given interpretations are the following:

I. The Interpretation of the Vision of the Great Image in Dan. 2.

Five verses contain the description of the Image, Stone, and Mountain (vv. 31-35), followed by ten verses giving the interpretation (vv. 36-45). Mark the introductory words, “This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king”; and the concluding words, “The dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.” We do well to underline in our Bibles the word “interpretation,” that we may note and remember the important fact that we are furnished here in the prophecy with an infallible guide to its meaning.

The interpretation of the vision of the Image given to Daniel in answer to prayer by “the God of heaven,” and conveyed by Daniel to Nebuchadnezzar, is as follows:

[1] "Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath

He given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. *Thou art this head of gold.*

[2] "And after thee shall arise *another kingdom* inferior to thee,

[3] "And *another third kingdom* of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.

[4] "And the *fourth kingdom* shall be strong as iron; forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest — the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

[5] "And in the days of these kings shall *the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed*; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure."

In this divinely given interpretation the four different metallic parts of the Image represent four successive kingdoms, of which the first is that of Babylon; while the Stone cut out without hands which destroys the Image, becomes a Mountain, and fills the earth, represents the Kingdom of the God of heaven, universal in its range and everlasting in its duration. Let us mark these five kingdoms in our Bibles by the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and write opposite the words "Thou art this head of gold" the name of Babylon, and opposite the fifth kingdom the words Kingdom of God. Let us note that the four kingdoms follow each other without any gap, as represented by the four parts of a single image, that the second is inferior to the first, that the third is characterized by worldwide extent, and the fourth by irresistible strength and all subduing conquests. Observe especially that the fourth kingdom is in its later stage "divided," that it consists partly of iron and

partly of clay, and that the attempts to reunite its broken fragments prove vain and futile. Contrast the great Colossus of human sovereignty, standing on feeble broken feet of iron mixed with clay, with the stable and everlasting Mountain of the Kingdom of God. Observe the superhuman origin of the final kingdom represented by a Stone cut out “without hands” — a kingdom founded by no sword or sceptre of man, built by no human will or wisdom, but by the invisible power of the Creator of heaven and earth. Note also the two stages of the kingdom represented by the Stone and the Mountain, and that before the Stone becomes the Mountain it falls on the feet of the Image, or on the Image in its finally divided clay and iron state, and utterly annihilates it.

The first and last of the five kingdoms in the vision are clearly and authoritatively interpreted as the Kingdom of Babylon and the Kingdom of the God of heaven; while the second, third, and fourth are the intervening kingdoms which fill up the course of Gentile rule between these two well-marked termini. Later visions plainly show what these intervening kingdoms are.

II. The Interpretation Of The Vision Of The Great Tree In Dan. 4

Nebuchadnezzar, who had heard from Daniel the interpretation of the great Image, now asks the prophet to tell him the interpretation of the great Tree. “Tell me the visions of my dream, and the interpretation thereof.” The king then recounts his dream, the narrative occupying nine verses, while Daniel’s interpretation fills the nine verses which follow (vv. 19-27). Observe the words: “This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High.” Nebuchadnezzar had seen in his dream a great Tree, reaching to heaven, under whose shadow dwelt the birds and beasts of the earth. He had heard a voice from heaven proclaim the decree, “Hew down the tree,” but “leave the stump of his roots in the earth,” and “let seven times pass over him.” Daniel thus interprets the meaning: “It is thou, O king” (ver. 22). As in the former vision Daniel had said to Nebuchadnezzar, “Thou art this head of gold,” so here he boldly tells the monarch that the vision concerns himself. He, Nebuchadnezzar, was symbolized by the great Tree; his far-reaching dominion by its widely extending branches; and his temporary abase-

ment during the period of “seven times” was represented by the cutting down of the Tree, whose stump was left bound with iron and brass in the soil during this predicted period. “They shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, ...and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will.” The rest of the chapter relates the historical fulfillment of the vision: “All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar.”

The “seven times” of the monarch’s debasement typify the “seven times” of the long degradation of worldly power under the Wild Beast empires of the later prophecy in chapter 7. The same empires which had been represented by the bright and terrible Image are here depicted by savage beasts of prey, whose dominion, strictly limited by the decree of Heaven to the revealed times and seasons of the prophecy, continues till the manifestation of the Kingdom of “the Son of Man.”

III. The Interpretation Of The Handwriting On The Wall Of Belshazzar’s Palace In Dan. 5

At Belshazzar’s feast the golden vessels from the Temple at Jerusalem were profaned by being used for the worship of “gods of gold and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.” It was the culmination of the sin of Babylon. Silently her doom was written. “In the same hour came forth fingers of a man’s hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king’s palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.” Moved by curiosity and consternation, the king asks the astrologers to interpret the mysterious words upon the wall; but none of them can do it. At the queen’s suggestion he sends for Daniel. The aged prophet stands in the presence of the idolatrous monarch, and, while refusing his proffered gifts, says: “I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation.” “This is the writing that was written, *Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin*. This is the interpretation of the thing: *Mene*; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. *Tekel*; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. *Peres*; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.” History, both sacred and profane, records the fulfillment of the prophecy. “In that night was Belshazzar the king of the

Chaldeans slain.” The Kingdom of Babylon, proud, sensual, and idolatrous, fell before the Medo-Persian power. In the interpretation of the word “*Peres*” the prophet Daniel plainly indicates the name of the second of the four kingdoms, that of “the Medes and Persians.” Thus the silver breast and arms of the great Image are interpreted. As the first of the four kingdoms is Babylon, so the second is Persia. In accepting this interpretation we build on plain statements in the Word of God, confirmed by the witness of history. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Herodotus, Xenophon, and the Canon of Ptolemy all combine to prove the distinctness of the Babylonian and Medo-Persian Kingdoms, and that the second of these conquered and succeeded the first.

IV. The Interpretation Of The Ram And He-goat In Dan. 8

We place this interpretation before that of chap. 7, as it gives us the name of the third empire. The Persian power is represented in this vision by a Ram, while the power which destroyed and succeeded it is depicted by a He-goat. The Ram has two horns, and is thus interpreted: “The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia.” The “he-goat” that “came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground,” which had “a notable horn between his eyes,” and which “smote the ram, and brake his two horns,” and “cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him,” is thus interpreted: “The rough goat is the king of GRECIA: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king. Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power” (8:21, 22).

Exactly the same succession of historic events is again plainly foretold in Dan. 11:2-4. “In the first year of Darius the Mede” the revealing angel says to Daniel: “Now I will show thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in PERSIA; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of GRECIA. And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and, shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his

kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those.” The three Persian kings who followed Cyrus were Cambyses, Smerdis, and Darius Hystaspis; while the fourth was Xerxes, who, “far richer” than his predecessors, invaded Greece, and by his defeat brought about the crisis of Persian decay. The mighty world-conquering king who overthrew the power of Persia was Alexander the Great of Macedon, and the fourfold division of his kingdom in the prophecy answers to the course of history. Prophecy and History agree in determining the Grecian Empire to be the third in the succession of kingdoms beginning with that of Babylon.

V. The Interpretation Of The Four Wild Beast Kingdoms, And Of The Kingdom Of The Son Of Man, In Dan. 7

The four kingdoms of the Image, followed by the Kingdom of the Mountain which fills the earth, representing the universal and everlasting Kingdom of God, are shown under a different set of symbols in Dan. 7, with additional features. “The four great empires of earth appear under strangely contrasted symbols to the king and to the prophet. In the former case a worldly idolater looked up, and beheld a great fourfold Image of earthly dominion; it was terrible yet attractive to him in its brilliancy. In the latter case a man of God looked down, and beheld four great beasts, terrible only in their fierce brutality.”¹

The identity of the four kingdoms in Dan. 2 and 7 is evident. “The number is the same, four in each. The starting point is the same, for each was given while Babylon was the ruling power (Dan. 2:1, 7:1). The issue is the same, for both are immediately followed by the Kingdom of Christ. The order is the same, for the kingdoms in the first Vision, as all admit, are successive; and in the other there are no less than seven or eight clauses which denote succession in time. There is the same gradation, for the noblest metal and the noblest animal take the lead in each series. Further, the kingdoms in each vision are described as occupying the whole space till the dominion of the saints of God... The first empire is that of BABYLON, for to the king of Babylon it was said: ‘Thou art this head of gold.’ If we require the names of the two next kingdoms, the angel Gabriel continues the message

of the prophet: 'The ram having two horns are the kings of MEDIA and PERSIA... The rough goat is the king of GRECIA.' If we ask the name and character of the fourth empire, the Evangelist supplies the answer: 'There went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed'; 'If we let Him alone, all men will believe on Him; and the ROMANS will come, and take away both our place and nation.' Four supreme and ruling kingdoms, and four only, are announced by name in the Word of God, from the time of Daniel to the close of the sacred Canon."²

The narrative of the vision of the four Wild Beast empires and the Kingdom of the Son of Man in Dan. 7 occupies the first fourteen verses, while the interpretation follows in vv. 16-27. Note the words: "So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things." First a general interpretation is given of the four Wild Beast powers and of the Kingdom of "the saints of the Most High" (vv. 17, 18), and then a more detailed interpretation of the fourth kingdom. "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down and break it in pieces." Here, as in the symbol of the great Image, a tenfold division of the fourth or Roman Empire is predicted. "The kingdom shall be divided... As the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken" (Dan. 2:41, 42). In the later vision this tenfold division is represented by the "ten horns" of the fourth wild beast. Among these rises "another little horn," with "eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things," which horn "made war with the saints, and prevailed against them" for a definite period. "They shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him" (vv. 25-27).

VI. The Interpretation Of The Seven Stars And The Seven Candlesticks In Rev. 1

The interpreter here is none other than our Lord Himself: “The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in My right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches” (Rev. 1:20).

This divinely given interpretation assigns a Christian character to the prophecy in which it occurs, for it interprets the candlesticks as Christian Churches, and the introductory portion of the book in which these are presented is so intimately and profoundly connected with the subsequent prophecy in chaps. 6-22, as to impart to the latter a Christian character, or to justify the view that it is a prophecy of the history and destiny of the Christian Church.

This intimate connection is seen in the fact that the promises in the letters to the seven Churches relate to experiences and privileges set forth in the predictions which occur in the prophetic portion of the book.

[1] The promise in the letter to the Church of Ephesus, “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God,” relates to a blessing foretold in chap. 22 in the course of the prophecy, where the scene is described in which the tree of life occupies a central place. The Christian character which certainly attaches to the promise must therefore also attach to the prophecy, for the thing promised and the thing prophesied are the same.

[2] The promise in the letter to the Church of Smyrna, “He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death,” relates to that final stage of salvation described in detail in chaps. 20 and 21. Both promise and prophecy refer to the experiences of those who escape the same final judgment.

[3] The promise in the letter to the Church of Pergamos, “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he which receiveth it,” is in one of its features analogous with the prophecy of the one hundred and forty-four thousand “redeemed from the earth” who have the Father’s name written in their foreheads, and also with the prophecy in chap. 22 concerning the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem: “They shall see His face, and His name shall be in their foreheads.” The thing promised and the thing prophesied are the bestowment on His redeemed people of a divine name in a written form, by the hand of the Redeemer.

[4] The promise in the letter to the Church of Thyatira is: “He that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron.” In chap. 12 is a prophecy concerning a “manchild who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron,” and in chap. 19 Christ Himself is seen in vision exercising this power. The ruling the nations “with a rod of iron” referred to in these cases must be the same. As the promise of ruling the nations with a rod of iron is addressed to Christian people, the act of ruling the nations with a rod of iron described in the prophecy must be something in which Christian people take part.

[5] The promise in the letter to the Church of Sardis is: “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life.” In chap. 7 is a prophecy concerning an innumerable multitude of all nations, peoples, and tongues, clothed in white robes, washed in the blood of the Lamb; in chap. 19 the Bride of the Lamb is seen arrayed in fine linen, “which is the righteousness of saints”; and in chap. 21 the names of the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem are said to be “written in the Lamb’s book of life.” Here again the blessings promised in the earlier part of the book are identical with the privileges prophetically foretold in its later pages.

[6] The promise in the letter to the Church of Philadelphia is: “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God: and I will write upon him My new name.” This is unquestionably a Christian promise relating to Christian experiences. Hence the prophecy in chap. 21 of the New Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God, having in its foundation the names of the Apostles of the Lamb, must be a Christian prophecy, or relate to things concerning the Christian Church. This link is clear and important.

[7] The promise in the letter to the Church of Laodicea is: “... To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me on My throne.” In the closing part of the prophecy, chaps. 20-22, the victorious saints are seen reigning with Christ: “I saw thrones, and they sat upon them”; “and they lived and reigned with Christ.” The reward promised to Christian victors — the reigning with Christ — is identical with the reward of the victors over the Wild Beast power described in the prophecy. Promise and prophecy relate to the

same exalted experiences, and describe the same ultimate reward. The conclusion to which we are led, that the prophecy chaps. 6-22 is a Christian prophecy, or relates to the experiences of the Christian Church, is strongly confirmed by the description of its witnessing and suffering saints as those who “overcame by the blood of the Lamb,” who “have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (12:11, 17), who “keep the faith of Jesus” (14:12), and are “the martyrs of Jesus” (17:6) slain “for the Witness of Jesus” (20:4). Who can those be who “have the testimony of Jesus,” who “keep the faith of Jesus,” and are “the martyrs of Jesus,” but Christian people? But these are the saints, the sufferers, and the victors of the prophetic portion of the book. On all these grounds the conclusion is inevitable that the Apocalypse is a Christian prophecy; or, in other words, that it relates to the experiences of the Christian Church in its militant and triumphant stages.

VII. The Interpretation Of The Woman, “Babylon The Great,” And Of The Seven-headed, Ten-horned Beast That Carrieth Her

Of all the visions in the PROPHEPIC part of the Apocalypse (chaps. 6-22) that of Babylon and the Beast in chap. 17 IS THE ONLY ONE DIVINELY INTERPRETED. Through the interpretation of the vision a door is opened to the understanding of the rest of the visions in the prophecy.

The vision of Babylon the Great, which is continued in chap. 18, is one of the most striking and important in the book. It is one of two contrasted visions in the closing part of the Apocalypse — that of the Harlot City, Babylon, and that of the New Jerusalem, the Bride of the Lamb. In each case the vision is shown to John by one of the seven vial-bearing angels. In each the object seen is doubly symbolized as a woman and a city. The Harlot City is “arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls”; while the Bride, the New Jerusalem, is arrayed in “fine linen, clean and white,” which is “the righteousness of saints,” and has “the glory of God.” The one is the associate of the Beast (Θηρίον), the other of the Lamb (ἄρνιον). The one is drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: the other consists of the saints, and includes the martyrs. The one is punished with both temporal and eter-

nal judgments: the other is rewarded with everlasting honor and felicity. The contrast between them is complete.

Contrasted Visions Of Babylon And Jerusalem, The Harlot And The Bride



Interpretation Of The Vision

Of Babylon the Great the Apostle says: “When I saw her, I wondered with a great wonder” (Rev. 17:6, R.V.). “And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou wonder? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and the ten horns.” Verses 8-18 contain the interpretation, which is clear, copious, and categorical. Five principal points are dealt with in the explanation under the expressions: “the beast that thou sawest” (ver. 8); “the seven heads” (ver. 9); “the ten horns which thou sawest” (ver. 12); “the waters which thou sawest” (ver. 15); “the woman which thou sawest” (ver. 18). Every point interpreted fixes the application of the vision to Rome.

[1] The Woman is interpreted as signifying the city of Rome. “The woman which thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth.” At the date when the Apocalypse was written Rome governed the world.

[2] The City is represented as sitting on “seven hills.” This is a well-known feature of the city of Rome. All the Latin poets for five hundred years speak of Rome as the seven-hilled city. Rome is depicted on her imperial coins as sitting on seven hills. Among the early Fathers, Tertullian and Jerome may be cited as referring to this feature. “I appeal,” says Tertullian, “to the citizens of Rome, the populace that dwell on the seven hills.”³ Jerome, when urging Marcella to quit Rome for Bethlehem, writes: “Read what is said in the Apocalypse of the seven hills.” The names of the seven hills of Rome are the Palatine, Quirinal, Aventine, Coelian, Viminal, Esquiline, and Janiculan.

[3] The Harlot City is represented as seated “upon many waters” (Rev. 17:1), which are interpreted to mean “peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues” (ver. 15). Such was certainly the position of Rome. The nations of the world were then, and for centuries after, subject to her sway.

[4] The Harlot City is represented as seated upon the seven-headed, ten-horned Beast. In the prophecies of Daniel the ten-horned Wild Beast is the fourth Gentile empire, or the Roman. No city ruled the Roman Empire but Rome.

[5] The sixth head of the Wild Beast power which carried the Harlot is stated to have been in existence at the time when the Apocalypse was written. Of the seven heads of the Wild Beast the angel says “five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come.” These seven heads are interpreted to be ruling powers. Five of these were past, the sixth in existence, the seventh in the future. Hence the Wild Beast under its sixth head represented the Roman Empire as governed by the then existing Roman Emperors, and consequently the Harlot City borne by that Beast must have represented Rome itself.

[6] The ten horns are interpreted as ten kingdoms, then future, into which the empire should be divided. These horns or kingdoms first submit to the Harlot City, and then rise against her, and “make her desolate and naked, and eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.” Their futurity at that early date is indicated in the words, they “have received no kingdom as yet” (ver. 12). It is a notorious matter of history that the Western Roman Empire was thus divided into the Gothic kingdoms, whose average number has been ten for the last twelve or thirteen centuries; and that these Gothic kingdoms have overthrown the city of Rome, and laid it waste, after having been subject to it for centuries as the city of the "Popes.

[7] The attire, character, and persecuting action of the Harlot City identify her with Rome. The view that the Babylon of the Apocalypse represents Rome has prevailed in the Christian Church, both Eastern and Western, from the earliest times. “Tell me, blessed John,” says Hippolytus, “what didst thou see and hear concerning Babylon? Arise and speak, for it sent thee also into banishment.”⁴ Victorinus, the author of the earliest known commentary on the Apocalypse, says: “The seven heads are the seven hills on which the Woman sitteth — that is, the city of Rome.” Augustine writes of “Rome the second Babylon, and the daughter of the first, to which it

pleased God to subject the whole world, and bring it all under one sovereignty.”⁵ Protestant interpreters maintain, while Roman Catholic interpreters admit, that the Babylon of the Apocalypse is Rome. Cardinal Bellarmine says: “Rome is signified in the Apocalypse by the name of Babylon.” Cardinal Baronius says: “All persons confess that Rome is denoted by the name Babylon in the Apocalypse of John.” Bossuet declares that “the features are so marked that it is easy to decipher Rome under the figure of Babylonx” (“*Rome sous la figure de Babylon*”).

While Romanists and Protestants are agreed that the Babylon of the Apocalypse is Rome, the former maintain that Babylon represents Rome Pagan, the latter Rome Papal. “I do not hesitate,” says Dean Alford, “to maintain that interpretation which regards Papal and not Pagan Rome as pointed out by the Harlot of this vision. The subject has been amply discussed by many expositors. I would especially mention Vitranga and Dr. Wordsworth.” “By the Woman sitting on the Wild Beast is signified that superintending and guiding power which the rider possesses over his beast, than which nothing could be chosen more apt to represent the superiority claimed and exercised by the See of Rome over the secular kingdoms of Christendom.” “The prophecy regards Rome Pagan and Papal, but from the figure of a Harlot, and the very nature of the predictions themselves more the latter than the former.”⁶

On this important point Bishop Wordsworth says: “The Woman, who is called the Harlot, sits on the Beast as on a throne — that is, governs it, and is supported by it. The Beast is represented as having ten horns bearing crowns, which, we are taught, are ten kingdoms; and these, it is added, had not received power in St. John’s age, but were afterwards to receive it, at one hour — that is, at one and the same hour with the Beast.

“Now, if we imagine the Woman on the Beast to be Heathen and not Christian Rome, where were these ten kingdoms, which had not existed in St. John’s age, and which were to arise and receive power contemporaneously with Heathen Rome? It was destroyed before such kingdoms arose. None can be found to correspond to St. John’s description.

“But now adopt, again, the other supposition. Let the Beast, with the Woman enthroned upon it, represent a Church. Let it represent the Church planted on the seven hills on which the Woman sits; let it represent the Church of Rome. Then all is plain. The prophecy is wonderfully fulfilled, and is proved to be divine. When the Empire of Rome fell, new kingdoms

arose from its ruins. The ten horns of the Beast sprouted up; then the Church of Rome increased in strength; and these kingdoms received power at the same time with her.

"And look again at the prophecy. These kings, we read, give their power and strength to the Beast. As kings — that is, they are called kings — but the Beast is the real sovereign of their subjects. What is the fact? The European kingdoms which arose at the dissolution of the Roman Empire did surrender themselves to the dominion of the Church of Rome. Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Poland, Hungary, France, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, and our own England, for many centuries, were subject to the Papacy. The Woman who sat upon the Beast had her hand upon its ten horns, and held them firmly in her grasp. She treated them as her subjects. The Papal coins claim this. *'Omnes Reges servient ei.'* *'Gens et Regnum, quod tibi non servierit, peribit.'* Such are her claims, declared at the coronation of every Pontiff. 'Know thyself the father of kings and princes, ruler of the world.' These are the words with which he is addressed, when the tiara is placed on his brow. And thus, in this very subjection of the kingdoms of the earth to Rome, in this her amplitude of dominion and plenitude of felicity, of which she has vaunted herself for many generations as a proof that she; is favored by Heaven, we recognize another proof that the Babylon of the Apocalypse is no other than the Church of Rome. Still further; these horns, or kingdoms, which receive power together with the Beast, will one day rise against it, and tear the flesh of the Harlot and burn her with fire.

"Now, again, for argument's sake, let the Woman on the Beast be heathen Rome. Then we readily allow that Alaric with his Goths, Attila with his Huns, Genseric with his Vandals, Odoacer with his Heruli, did indeed sack the city of Rome. But when did they ever receive power together with Rome? When did they give their power and thier strength to heathen Rome? Never. If, therefore the Woman upon the Beast is only the city of Pagan Rome, then the prophecy of St. John has failed. But the marvel predicted by the Apocalypse is this — and a stupendous mystery it is — that some of the powers which received strength with the Beast, and gave up their might to it, they, under the overruling sway of God's retributive justice, will one day rise against the Woman seated on the Beast, and tear her flesh, and burn her with fire. And, what is still more awfully marvelous, they will do this, although they will league with the Beast and with the False Prophet against Christ; and they will destroy Babylon, not for love of Zion, not for the

maintenance of God's truth or for the advancement of His glory, but in a mysterious transport of indignation and in a wild ecstasy of revenge; and when they have done the deed, and have destroyed Babylon, they will weep over her.

“Such is the prophecy of St. John. This portion of it remains to be fulfilled. But Pagan Rome has long since ceased to be. Therefore these predictions cannot concern Pagan Rome: but they do concern the seven-hilled city Rome; and therefore they point at Papal Rome; and the Woman upon the Beast is not heathen Rome, but it is the city and the Church of Papal Rome.”⁷

A fuller examination of the facts of history is necessary at this point. We have merely glanced at some of them, and even now can do no more than group together the leading facts connected with the historical fulfillment of the prophecy.

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1. *Approaching End of the Age*, p. 33.↩
 2. Birks' *First Two Visions of Daniel*, p. 20.↩
 3. *Apol.* 35.↩
 4. *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist*, sec. 36.↩
 5. *City of God*, i. 18-22.↩
 6. *Commentary on the Greek Testament*, Rev. xvii.↩
 7. *Wordsworth on the Apocalypse*, pp. 371-375.↩

4. Historical Fulfillment Of The Prophecy Concerning The Harlot Babylon, Or Proof From History That Rome Is The Babylon Of The Apocalypse

THE APOSTLE JOHN eighteen centuries ago marveled at what he foresaw concerning the character and career of the Woman drunken with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus; we, on the other hand, living in this late age marvel at what we see has taken place during the intervening centuries in fulfillment of the prophecy. The fact is, that the things which John foresaw have come to pass. Their fulfillment is written on the page of history in letters of blood and flame. There has arisen in the sphere of the Roman Empire, and there has reigned in and from the city of Rome, the seven-hilled city of the Caesars, just such a power as is predicted in the Apocalypse. Translate the symbolic language of the prophecy into plain non-figurative terms, and it becomes the history of the last twelve to fourteen centuries.

One of the most important compendiums relating to the organization and local development of the Roman Catholic Church is that presented in a quarto volume entitled *Orbis Terrarum Catholicus, sive totius ecclesiae Catholicae et occidentis et orientis*. It is a geographical and statistical “con-spectus” by a Jesuit author (O. Werner, S.J.) of the whole Catholic Church in the West and East, drawn from recent authoritative sources, and illustrates the truth that the so-called “Catholic” Church is still a vast worldwide society. The Church of Rome overshadows the larger part of Christendom today. It boasts of universality, as including a host of “peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.” It has a thousand bishops, in thirty countries, and

half a million priests. As its head is an aged Pontiff, claiming the highest authority in the world as the visible representative of Deity, the Vicar of Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church of Christ on earth, God's Vicegerent, the Infallible Teacher of Faith and Morals, whose doctrines and decrees are ir-reformable; having power to bind and loose the souls of men in heaven, earth, and hell; canonizing souls in heaven, pardoning sins on earth, and remitting the pains of purgatory in the world beneath; reigning thus in three worlds, and wearing in token of the fact a triple crown; a crown grafted on a miter; a miter within as the great High Priest in the Church of God; and a crown without as the highest monarch; crown above crown in threefold splendor, encircling and glorifying his miter with the incomparable symbol of celestial, terrestrial, and infernal dignity.¹ That triple crowned Pontiff sits today in the Church of God, "*non simplex homo, sed quasi Deus*" — "not simply man, but as it were God"; so self-described in his own deliberate, authoritative utterances; utterances forming part of the infallible decisions and definitions of the long line of Popes who have ruled from Rome the larger part of Christendom for centuries; "*tantae enim est dignitatis et potestatis, ut faciat unum et idem Tribunal cum Christo... et quasi Deus in terra*" — of so great dignity and power that he may constitute one and the same tribunal with Christ... and as if God on earth... having plenitude of power... the government at once of the earthly and heavenly kingdoms... the key-bearer of eternal life.² At his feet, as he sits on the day of his coronation on the high altar of St. Peter's, kneel seventy cardinals, attired in long scarlet robes, princes of the Catholic Church, constituting her highest conclave; they kneel at his feet in the presence of assembled awestruck thou — sands, and one by one they kiss his feet, worshiping him as the representative of Deity." They adore his Holiness on their knees, kissing his feet and his right hand." "After this his Holiness is set down on the highest steps of the Altar, where he solemnly blesses the people." He lifts up his right hand, extending two fingers and the thumb, symbolizing his authority as the representative of the three Persons of the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and thus he blesses the assembled kneeling multitudes in the vast and solemn sanctuary, who form a visible part of the two hundred millions of Christendom owning his spiritual sway. And this takes place in Rome, the Rome of the Caesars, the Rome of that Domitian who sent the blessed Apostle John into banishment! "When I saw her," said that John — "When I saw her," in prophetic vision — saw that gaudy, glorious, guilty

harlot enthroned on the seven-hilled city — “I wondered with great admiration.”

The Church Of Rome Symbolized By A Harlot

It is well known that a faithless woman is, in the language of tits prophets, the type and symbol of a faithless and apostate Church (see Ezek. 16 and 23). The Church of Rome is an apostate Church. While professing to be the Church of Christ she has been the guilty paramour of the ungodly kings of Christendom. She has accepted their royal gifts and rich endowments, and has bestowed on them in return the boasted wealth of her spiritual privileges. She has been carried by them in lofty state and splendor, sustained by their authority, and protected by their power; ruling them, and through them ruling the subject nations of Christendom. And all these centuries during which she has thus ruled in association with the kings of the earth she has held in her hand a cup (oh marvelous mark!) — a cup such as old heathen Rome never extended to the nations: for Pagan Rome was not their temptress; she made no attempt to intoxicate them with error or idolatry; she cared not what they believed, or what they did, or what they worshipped, so only they submitted to her imperial rule; whereas Papal Rome has for ages held in her hand the intoxicating cup of falsehood, delusion, and idolatry — a cup drugged with the wine of soul-destroying error, as the teacher of false religion, the temptress and deceiver of the kings and peoples of Christendom. Well might the blessed Apostle gaze at her with amazement! And we gaze at her today as the foretold apocalyptic Harlot with equal if not greater wonder.

The Name On The Forehead Of The Harlot

What is the name which has been written by the finger of God upon her brow? It is “MYSTERY!” Now let the fact be noted that no such name as this ever was or could have been characteristic of the Rome of the Caesars. Pagan Rome was no “Mystery” in Christian eyes. Her idolatry was open and confessed. The Christian Church was never deceived by her. Heathen Rome never claimed to be other than she was. But this Harlot “Babylon” deceives

the nations by professing to be Christian, while in reality she is anti-Christian. What is this “Mystery” but the development of that “MYSTERY OF INIQUITY” which began to work in the Christian Church in apostolic times? (2 Thess. 2:7).

Further, she is called “BABYLON THE GREAT.” What symbolical title could better describe Papal Rome; for has she not been the worldly, idolatrous, proud, persecuting power in the history of the Christian Church which the literal Babylon was in the history of apostate Israel? What could better symbolize the idolatrous and persecuting Church of Rome than that Babylon which in the days of Jewish apostasy filled Jerusalem with bloodshed, and drank to her idol gods out of the golden vessels of Jehovah’s sanctuary?

The Harlot Carried By The Ten-Horned Beast

Further, it is important to observe that the Beast that bears the Harlot is represented in the vision as the “TEN-HORNED BEAST.” This figure portrays the Roman Empire in its broken and divided stage, as ruled by many sovereigns — as consisting of the group of kingdoms which has occupied ever since the Gothic invasions of the fifth century the sphere of the sovereignty then overturned. In his description of the fall of the Western Empire of Rome the historian Hallam says: “Before the conclusion of the fifth century the mighty fabric of empire, which valor and policy had founded upon the seven hills of Rome, was finally overthrown, in all the west of Europe, by the barbarous nations from the north, whose martial energy and whose numbers were irresistible. A race of men, formerly unknown or despised, had not only dismembered that proud sovereignty, but permanently settled themselves in its fairest provinces, and imposed their yoke upon the ancient possessors. The Vandals were masters of Africa; the Suevi held part of Spain; the Visigoths possessed the remainder, with a large portion of Gaul; the Burgundians occupied the provinces watered by the Rhone and Saone; the Ostrogoths almost all Italy.”

The Ten Horns

The following is the list of the ten kingdoms represented by the ten horns of the Beast, given by Sir Isaac Newton: —

1. The kingdom of the *Vandals* and *Alans* in Spain and Africa.
2. The kingdom of the *Suevians* in Spain.
3. The kingdom of the *Visigoths*.
4. The kingdom of the *Alans* in Gallia.
5. The kingdom of the *Burgundians*.
6. The kingdom of the *Franks*.
7. The kingdom of the *Britains*.
8. The kingdom of the *Huns*.
9. The kingdom of the *Lombards*.
10. The kingdom of *Ravenna*.

Geographical Sphere Of The Ten Horns

In my work on *The Divine Program of the World's History* I have shown that “the ten horns or kingdoms of the fourth empire must none of them be sought in the realms of the third, second, or first, but exclusively in the realm of the fourth, or in the territory peculiar to Rome, and which had never formed part either of the Grecian, Medo- Persian, or Babylonian Empires. Sir Isaac Newton says on this point:”Seeing the body of the third beast is confined to the nations on this side the Euphrates, and the body of the fourth beast is confined to the nations on this side of Greece, we are to look for all the four heads of the third beast among the nations on this side the Euphrates, and for all the eleven horns of the fourth beast among the nations on this side of Greece. Therefore we do not reckon the Greek Empire seated at Constantinople among the horns of the fourth beast, because it belonged to the body of the third.”

Average Number Of The Gothic Kingdoms Of Western Christendom

The historian Machiavel, without the slightest reference to this prophecy, gives the following list of the nations which occupied the territory of the

Western Empire at the time of the fall of Romulus Augustulus, the last emperor of Rome.

The Lombards, the Franks, the Burgundians, the Ostrogoths, the Visigoths, the Vandals, the Heruli, the Sueves, the Huns, and the Saxons — ten in all.

After a time the Huns disappeared, but other powers arose and obtained a home in the domains of old Rome. The changes were incessant, as horde after horde of barbarian invaders pressed in on every side to share the spoils; but still the number of established kingdoms was again and again ten. It never rose to twenty or thirty; it never fell to two or three. Charlemagne in his day reduced it for a time, and attempted, like Napoleon in a later age, to restore unity; both utterly failed, and after a very few years the normal ten kingdoms reappeared.

The following list gives the contemporary kingdoms existing in Western Europe at intervals of a hundred years, from the ninth to the nineteenth centuries. It is extracted from a much longer series in *The Four Prophetic Empires*, by the Rev. T. R. Birks, and is introduced by the remark that a measure of uncertainty must exist as to whether some of the states should be included, as “it is sometimes doubtful whether a kingdom can claim an independent sovereignty on account of the complex and varying nature of its political relations.” But as exactly as it can be estimated from the records of history the following list presents the members of this family of kingdoms as they appeared from century to century. Where a note of interrogation follows a name, it implies that there are some elements of doubt as to whether it should be included or not.

A.D. 860

Italy, Provence, Lorraine, East France, West France, Exarchate, Venice, Navarre, England, Scotland. Total, 10.

A.D. 950

Germany, Burgundy, Lombardy, Exarchate, Venice, France, England, Scotland, Navarre, Leon. Total, 10.

A.D. 1050

Germany, Exarchate, Venice, Norman Italy, France, England, Scotland, Arragon, Castile, Normandy (?), Hungary (?). Total, 9 to 11.

A.D. 1150

Germany, Naples, Venice, France, England, Scotland, Arragon, Castile, Portugal, Hungary, Lombardy (?). Total, 10, or perhaps 11.

A.D. 1250

Germany and Naples, Venice, Lombardy, France, England, Scotland, Arragon, Castile, Portugal, Hungary. Total, 10.

A.D. 1350

Germany, Naples, Venice, Switzerland (?), Milan (?), Tuscany (?), France, England and Scotland, Arragon, Castile, Portugal, Hungary. Total, 9 to 12.

A.D. 1453

Austria, Naples, Venice, France, England, Scotland, Arragon, Castile, Portugal, Hungary, Switzerland (?), Savoy (?), Milan (?), Tuscany (?). Total, 11 to 14.

A.D. 1552

Austria, Venice, France, England, Scotland, Spain, Naples, Portugal, Hungary, Switzerland (?), Lombardy (?). Total, 9 to 11.

A.D. 1648

Austria, Venice, France, Britain (?), Spain and Naples, Portugal, Hungary, Switzerland (?), Savoy, Tuscany, Holland. Total, 8 to 11.

A.D. 1750

Austria and Hungary, France, Savoy and Sardinia, Venice, Tuscany, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland (?), Naples (?), Britain (?), Holland. Total, 8 to 11.

A.D. 1816

Austria, Bavaria, Würtemberg (?), Naples, Tuscany, Sardinia, Lombardy (?), France, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Britain (?), Switzerland (?). Total, 9 to 13.

An examination of this list reveals the surprising fact, which would only become more apparent were the list lengthened ten times, so as to present a census of each decade instead of each century, that amidst unceasing and almost countless fluctuations, the kingdoms of modern Europe have from their birth to the present day averaged ten in number. They have never, since the break up of old Rome, been united into one single empire; they have never formed one whole even like the United States. No scheme of proud ambition seeking to reunite the broken fragments has ever succeeded; when such have arisen, they have been invariably dashed to pieces. Witness the legions of Napoleon buried beneath the snows of Russia, the armadas of Spain wrecked by Atlantic storms, and all the futile royal marriage arrangements by which monarchs vainly sought to create a revived empire. In spite of all human effort, in defiance of every attempt at reunion, the European commonwealth for thirteen or fourteen centuries has numbered on an average ten kingdoms.

And the division is as apparent now as ever! Plainly and palpably inscribed on the map of Europe this day, it confronts the skeptic with its silent but conclusive testimony to the fulfillment of this great prophecy. Who can alter or add to this, tenfold list of the kingdoms now occupying the sphere of Rome?

Italy, Austria, Switzerland, France, Germany, England, Holland, Belgium, Spain, And Portugal.

Ten, and no more; ten, and no less! The Franco-Prussian War and the unification of Italy have once more developed distinctly the normal number of the kingdoms of Europe.

The tenfold division of the Western Empire of Rome is then an indisputable fact, and the submission for long centuries of this divided Empire of Rome to the power of the Papacy cannot be questioned or denied. “Under the sacerdotal monarchy of St. Peter,” says Gibbon, “the nations began to resume the practice of seeking on the banks of the Tiber their kings, their laws, and the oracles of their fate.” The temporal possessions of the Popes were the gift of Pepin and Charlemagne. In his investiture with the papal tiara the Pope is thus addressed: “Receive this triple crown, and know that thou art the Father of princes, and the King and Ruler of the world.” The coronation oath enjoined by Popes and agreed to by the Western Emperors was that they would “be faithful and submissive to the Pope and Roman Church.”³ In token of their subjection they prostrated themselves before the Pope, and kissed his feet. They held their kingdoms from him. It was his “to make kings and unmake, to assign kingdoms and to take them away.” The Catholic kings of Christendom supported and guarded the Romish Church and its Papal Head with their laws, their gifts, and their swords. Even as late as the time of the third Napoleon France continued to support the Papacy against the will of the Italians. Addressing the French Legislature on March 1st, 1860, Louis Napoleon said: “For the last eleven years I have sustained alone at Rome the power of the Holy Father, without having ceased a single day to revere in him the sacred character of the chief of our religion.” This position of Papal Rome as seated for centuries upon the Roman Empire in its divided or ten-horned state is a plain proof that she is the Harlot of the apocalyptic vision.

The Harlot Recognized By Her Attire

Further, we identify Papal Rome as the Harlot of the Apocalypse by her characteristic attire. Her garments of purple, scarlet, and gold, adorned with precious stones and pearls, what are these but the notable and characteristic dress of the popes, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, and priests of the Church of Rome — the dress they wear in their churches, in their conclaves, in their processions? Is it not notorious that the robes and miters of

Romish popes and bishops are covered with gold and silver, and adorned with “diamonds, sapphires, emeralds, chrysolites, jaspers, pearls, and all precious stones”? Is it not a fact that the papal diadem surpasses all other diadems — that it is more richly wrought, more marvelously magnificent with costly jewels, than any crown of mere terrestrial monarchy? The Church of Rome wears today the distinctive dress described in the Apocalypse. The color and character of her attire have from the beginning been depicted in sacred prophecy; The gleam of the jewels, the glow of the scarlet, the deep dye of the purple, are plainly pictured there. By her striking and significant attire we recognize the Church of Rome as the Harlot of the Apocalypse.

The Persecuting Character Of The Church Of Rome

But more than this, more than by any other mark, we recognize Papal Rome by the last, the most marvelous characteristic which is given us in the sacred prediction — her strange and terrible inebriation with the blood of saints and martyrs! Old Heathen Rome persecuted for a brief period the early Church, but Papal Rome through long centuries has held the preeminence as the persecutor of those faithful to the teachings of the Gospel of Christ. She has been all along in her essential and unalterable character a persecuting Church. Persecution has occupied a prominent place in her doctrines, decrees, canons, excommunications, tribunals, trials, condemnations, imprisonments, executions, and exterminating wars. Centuries of persecuting action witness against her. Her laws for the persecution and extermination of heretics have increased in malignity from their first rise down to modern times. Plainly and openly she has declared herself to be a persecuting Church. She has gloried in her intolerance. Her avowed doctrine is “that heretics ought to be visited by the secular powers with temporal punishments, and even with death itself.” Bellarmine, her great cardinal, who wrote those words, said of the saints of God who protested against her iniquity: “If you shut them in prison or send them into exile, they corrupt those near them with their words and those at a distance with their books; therefore the only remedy is to send them betimes into their own place.” Under these maxims Rome has always acted. What a long roll of bloody persecu-

tions is her record! The extirpation of the Albigenses, the massacre of the Waldenses, the martyrdoms of the Lollards, the slaughter of the Bohemians, the burning of Huss, Jerome, Savonarola, Frith, Tyndale, Ridley, Hooper, Cranmer, Latimer, and thousands of others as godly and faithful as they, have been her acts; the demoniacal cruelties of the Inquisition were invented by her mind and inflicted by her hand — that Inquisition which was for centuries the mighty instrument of her warfare against devoted men and women whose crime was only this, that they “kept the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” The ferocious cruelties of the Duke of Alva in the Netherlands; the bloody martyrdoms of Queen Mary’s reign; the extinction by fire and sword of the Reformation in Spain and Italy, in Portugal and Poland; the massacre of St. Bartholomew; the long and cruel persecutions of the Huguenots, and all the infamies and barbarities of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, which flung its refugees on every shore of Europe, were perpetrated by Papal Rome. Her victims have been innumerable. In Spain alone Llorente reckons as the sufferers of the Inquisition 31,912 burnt alive, and 291,450 so-called penitents forced into submission “by water, weights, fire, pulleys, and screws,” and “all the apparatus by which the sinews could be strained without cracking, and the bones bruised without breaking, and the body racked exquisitely without giving up the ghost.” A million perished in the massacre of the Albigenses. In the thirty years which followed the first institution of the Jesuits nine hundred thousand faithful Christians were slain; Thirty-six thousand were dispatched by the common executioner in the Netherlands, by the direction of the Duke of Alva, who boasted of the deed. Fifty thousand Flemings and Germans were hanged, burnt, or buried alive under Charles V. And when we have added to this the bloodshed of the Thirty Years’ War in Germany, and the long agony of other and repeated massacres of Protestants in England, Ireland, Scotland, France, Spain, Italy, and the Netherlands, we have to remember that for all this “no word of censure ever issued from the Vatican, except in the brief interval when statesmen and soldiers grew weary of bloodshed and looked for means to admit the heretics to grace.”

In the light of these facts we maintain that the fulfillment of the prophecy uttered of old in Patmos is plainly evident. The prediction of the Apostle as to its leading features was this: that “a domineering power was to be established in the city of Rome, to corrupt the faith, to spread that corruption, to be distinguished by the display of gaudy splendors, to persecute

the professors of the Christian faith, to intoxicate itself in the blood of persecution, to be supported by subservient kings, and to requite them for their homage with larger draughts of her cup of abominations.”⁴ We are justified in maintaining that the history of the Church of Rome has fulfilled every detail of the prophecy. “Error and flagrant corruption of doctrine and worship, meretricious splendor, a sanguinary spirit of persecution, a system of domineering policy exercised over dependent kings and infatuated nations” — these are the features which any faithful historian would be obliged to select and insist on in a general description and narrative of the character and action of the Church of Rome during the long period of her power.

By its record of the fulfillment of what has been foretold the history has justified the prophecy. It has unveiled the great object for which the Apocalypse was written. Not for the guidance of the saints of the first few centuries merely or mainly, or for the benefit of the saints of some brief period yet to come, was this wondrous prophecy indited, but for the instruction, the warning, the strengthening, the confirmation, the consolation, of the suffering Church of all the Christian centuries, including the countless persecuted saints and faithful martyrs of mediaeval times, and the glorious company of witnesses to Gospel truth raised up in the age of the Reformation. The Apocalypse, as predicting the Christian apostasy, was written chiefly for saints exposed to the delusions and suffering under the persecutions of the Church of Rome, and its distinguishing glory is this, that it has given us the Reformation! Let us boldly avow our recognition of these facts. Guided and inspired by these marvelous prophecies, the Reformed Church broke loose from the bondage — of Romish error and usurpation, and came forth into liberty, the herald of the liberation of the world, in confessed obedience to the divine command: “Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and receive not of her plagues.”

To conclude in the eloquent words of another: “The Holy Spirit, foreseeing, no doubt, that the Church of Rome would adulterate the truth by many gross and grievous abominations, that she would anathematize all who would not communicate with her, and denounce them as cut off from the body of Christ and the hope of everlasting salvation; foreseeing also that Rome would exercise a wide and dominant sway for many generations, by boldly iterated assertions of unity, antiquity, sanctity, and universality; foreseeing also that these pretensions would be supported by the civil sword of many secular governments, among which the Roman Empire would be di-

vided at its dissolution, and that Rome would thus be enabled to display herself to the world in an august attitude of imperial power and with the dazzling splendor of temporal felicity; foreseeing also that the Church of Rome would captivate the imaginations of men by the fascinations of art allied with religion, and would ravish their senses and rivet their admiration by gaudy colors and stately pomp and prodigal magnificence; foreseeing also that she would beguile their credulity by miracles and mysteries, apparitions and dreams, trances and ecstasies, and would appeal to such evidence in support of her strange doctrines; foreseeing likewise that she would enslave men and (much more) women by practicing on their affections and by accommodating herself with dangerous pliancy to their weakness, relieving them from the burden of thought and from the perplexity of doubt by proffering them the aid of infallibility, soothing the sorrows of the mourner by dispensing pardon and promising peace to the departed, removing the load of guilt from the oppressed conscience by the ministries of the confessional and by nicely poised compensations for sin, and that she would flourish for many centuries in proud and prosperous impunity before her sins would reach to heaven and come in remembrance before God; foreseeing also that many generations of men would thus be tempted to fall from the faith and to become victims of deadly error, and that they who clung to the truth would be exposed to cozening flatteries and fierce assaults and savage tortures from her, — the Holy Spirit, we say, foreseeing all these things in His divine knowledge, and being the ever-blessed Teacher, Guide, and Comforter of the Church, was graciously pleased to provide a heavenly antidote, for all these dangerous, widespread, and long-enduring evils, by dictating the Apocalypse. In this divine book the Spirit of God has portrayed the Church of Rome such as none but He could have foreseen that she would become, and such as, wonderful and lamentable to say, she has become. He has thus broken her magic spells; He has taken the wand of enchantment from her hand; He has lifted the mask from her face; and with His divine hand He has written her true character in large letters, and has planted her title on her forehead, to be seen and read of all: ‘MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.’”⁵

1. “*Hinc Papa triplici corona coronatur, tanquam Rex Coeli, et Terrae, et Infernorum*” (Annot. i. ad decis. 2, Biblioth. Canon. Ferraris, Tom. vii.).↵
2. Tom. vi. in cap. quarto, 3.↵
3. *Decline and Fall*, chap. xlix.↵
4. Davison *On Prophecy*, p. 319.↵
5. Bishop Wordsworth *On Rome, the Babylon of the Apocalypse*.↵

5. Use Of The Key

HAVING NOW FIRMLY FIXED the interpretation of the prophecy concerning the Harlot “Babylon,” and the ten-horned “Beast that carrieth her,” by means of the detailed and definite explanations of their meaning contained in the seventeenth chapter of Revelation, and by their fulfillment in the course of history, we proceed to use this interpreted vision as a key to open the remaining visions, in the Apocalypse; for such is the connection of the various visions in the book, that the opening of its central vision is a manifest clue to the meaning of the whole.

This method of interpreting the Apocalypse is not new. It is adopted and advocated in Mede’s *Key of the Revelation*, published in 1643. Addressing the reader, he says: “Lest haply thou mayest doubt whether anywhere in the Revelation out of all those visions such may be found in which thou mayest safely pitch thy foot, and from whence as it were from a station or watch-tower thou mayest take the scantling of the rest of the Revelation, behold provision made for this thing also by the Holy Spirit’s most wise counsel, in that famous vision of the great whore which only and alone of all the visions the angel interpreteth to John. But to what end, except that by that an entrance be opened as it were through a door to the rest, otherwise inaccessible? What wilt thou more? Therefore by this way enter thou, calling upon the Father of lights, and being entered use the key of entry to the opening of the rest.”

I. Identity of the Beast

We have seen that in the interpreted vision contained in Rev. 17 the ten-horned Wild Beast power represents the Roman Empire, and the Harlot Babylon the Church of Rome.

II. Three Visions Of The Beast Power

There are three visions in the Apocalypse of the ten-horned Wild Beast power.

First Vision of the Wild Beast.

“And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red Dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the Dragon stood before the Woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born” (12:3, 4).

Second Vision of the Wild Beast.

“And I saw a Beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his heads ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the Beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the Dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority” (13:1, 2).

Third Vision of the Wild Beast.

“So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a Woman sit upon a scarlet colored Beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns” (17:3).

III. The Same Great Power: The Roman Empire

The three visions of the Wild Beast are visions of the same great power — the Roman Empire.

[1] The three visions must refer to the same Wild Beast power. The identity of their leading features justifies this conclusion. The Wild Beast in

each of the visions has seven heads and ten horns. There cannot be more than one such power.

[2] Since the interpreted vision (chap. 17) establishes the conclusion that this seven-headed, ten-horned Wild Beast represents the Roman Empire, the three visions must be visions of the Roman Empire.

[3] This conclusion is confirmed by the identity of the ten-horned Beast of the Apocalypse with the fourth Wild Beast of the visions of Daniel, which we have already seen symbolizes the Roman Empire.

Some have held that the first four heads of the draconic power in Rev. 12 represent kingdoms which preceded the Roman Empire, and some that the Beast of Rev. 13 represents the four empires. Both these views we hold to be erroneous; but even if correct, both the Dragon of chap. 12 and “Beast” of chap. 13 would include the Roman Empire itself as a chief part of the thing symbolized.

IV. Successive Stages

The three visions of the Wild Beast power represent successive stages in the history of the Roman Empire.

[1] The vision in chap. 12 represents the Roman Empire under the regnancy of its seven heads, for in this vision the heads are crowned with diadems.

[2] The vision in chap. 13 represents the Roman Empire under the regnancy of its ten horns and of its eighth revived head, for the horns are crowned with diadems.

[3] The vision in chap. 17 represents the Roman Empire in its ten-horned or divided state, first as carrying, then as casting of, wasting, and destroying the Harlot Babylon the Great (in the vision no crowns are seen on the heads or horns).

Their leading features justify the view that the three visions in chaps. 12, 13, and 17 of the Wild Beast power represent the Roman Empire in the successive stages of its early progress, its central development, and its later decline.

V. Two Principle Stages

The history of the Wild Beast power is divided into two principal stages by the “wounding to death” and subsequent “healing” of the seventh head (Rev. 13).

The first is the Draconic stage of its existence, and represents the Roman Empire up to the date of its overthrow by the Goths and Vandals, a revolution completed in A.D. 476. The second may be termed the False Prophet stage of its history — the stage in which its power is wielded by a second Beast, of lamb-like form, but draconic in speech (Rev. 13), called in chap. 19 “the False Prophet.” In the restoration of the Empire thus effected the “deadly wound” inflicted by the Gothic overthrow is “healed.”

The following passage from the pen of Dr. Döllinger, whose acquaintance with the history of the Church of Rome is such as to make him an authority on the subject, exhibits strikingly that restoration of the Roman Empire under its papal head which succeeded the Gothic overthrow:

“Out of the chaos of the great Northern migrations and the ruins of the Roman Empire there gradually arose a new order of states, whose central point was the Papal See. Therefrom inevitably resulted a position not only new, but very different from the former. The new Christian Empire of the West was created and upheld by the Pope. The Pope became constantly more and more (by the state of affairs with the will of the princes and of the people, and through the power of public opinion) the Chief Moderator at the head of the European Commonwealth, and as such he had to proclaim and defend the Christian law of nations, to settle international disputes, to mediate between princes and peoples, and to make peace between belligerent states. The Curia became a great spiritual and temporal tribunal. In short, the whole of Western Christendom formed in a certain sense a kingdom, at whose head stood the Pope and the Emperor, the former, however, with continually increasing and far preponderating authority.”¹

This ruin and subsequent rise of Rome is thus referred to by the historian Gibbon: “About the close of the sixth century Rome had reached the lowest period of her depression. By the removal of the seat of Empire, and the successive loss of the provinces, the sources of public and private opulence were exhausted; the lofty tree under whose shade the nations of the earth had reposed was deprived of its leaves and branches, and the sapless trunk was left to wither on the ground... Like Thebes or Babylon or Carthage, the name of Rome might have been erased from the earth, if the city had not

been animated by a vital principle, which again restored her to honour and dominion.”²

Under the noonday of papal dominion which followed “Rome inspired all the terror of her ancient name; she was once more the mistress of the world, and kings were her vassals.”³

VI. The “Deadly Wound” And The “Hindering Power”

The infliction of the “deadly wound” on the ruling power of the Western Empire is identical with the removal of the hindering or withholding power referred to in Paul’s prophecy of the “Man of Sin.”

This link between the Thessalonian prophecy and the Apocalypse is of great importance. It is admitted by both Protestant and Roman Catholic interpreters that St. Paul’s “Man of Sin” and St. John’s “Antichrist” are the same. But the rise of the “Man of Sin” is preceded by the removal of a hindering power which was in existence in Paul’s own day, and to which he referred in carefully guarded language, a power which the early Church recognized as that of Imperial Rome; and similarly the rise of the antichristian persecuting power in the Apocalypse is preceded by the removal of ruling power in the Roman State. The conclusion is that the hindering power removed in each case is the same.

It is a remarkable fact, in relation to the “let” or hindrance to the manifestation of the “Man of Sin,” that “we have the consenting testimony of the early Fathers, from Irenaeus, the disciple of the disciple of St. John, down to Chrysostom and Jerome, to the effect that it was understood to be the imperial power ruling and residing at Rome.”⁴ Thus, commenting on the words, “Ye know what detaineth that he might be revealed in his time,” Tertullian says: “What obstacle is there but the Roman State, the falling away of which by being scattered into ten kingdoms shall introduce Antichrist... that the Beast Antichrist, with his False Prophet, may wage war on the Church of God.”⁵

Here the Thessalonian and Apocalyptic prophecy are in a remarkable way connected together and interpreted, and this long prior to their historic fulfillment. As to the fact that the removal of the imperial power made way for the rise of the Popes Cardinal Manning’s testimony is important. In his

work on the temporal power of the Popes he says: “Now the abandonment of Rome was the liberation of the Pontiffs. Whatsoever claims to obedience the Emperors may have made, and whatsoever compliance the Pontiff may have yielded, the whole previous relation, anomalous, and annulled again and again by the vices and outrages of the Emperors, was finally dissolved by a higher power. The providence of God permitted a succession of eruptions, Gothic, Lombard, and Hungarian, to desolate Italy, and to efface from it every remnant of the Empire. The Pontiffs found themselves alone, the sole fountains of order, peace, law, and safety. And from the hour of this providential liberation, when by a divine intervention the chains fell off from the hands of the successor of St. Peter, as once before from his own, no sovereign has ever reigned in Rome except the Vicar of Jesus Christ.”⁶

VII. The Beast and Babylon Central to Apocalyptic Prophecy

The story of “the Beast” and “Babylon,” or of the Roman Empire and Church of Rome, occupies a considerable and central portion of the apocalyptic prophecy.

Either “the Beast” or “Babylon” are distinctly referred to in no less than ten successive chapters: 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20.

The following are the principal passages in these chapters in which one or other of these two great antichristian powers are spoken of: —

[1] Chap. 11:7: “When they [the two witnesses] shall have finished their testimony, the Beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.” This is the same as “the Beast that was, and is not, and yet is, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition” (17:8).

[2] Chap. 12:3: “And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red Dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns [or diadems] upon his heads.” The rest of the chapter is taken up with the warfare waged by this draconic power against those “who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of JESUS CHRIST.”

[3] Chap. 13:1: “And I saw a Beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns ten diadems, and upon his heads names of blasphemy” (R.V.). The chapter relates the wounding to death and

healing again of one of the heads of the Wild Beast, his war with the saints, and his overcoming them; and the action of a second Beast, “with two horns like unto a lamb,” who “spake as a dragon,” and “exercised the authority of the first Beast in his sight,” making an “image of the Beast,” and causing it to “speak,” and compelling all to worship it, and to receive its mark on their right hand and on their forehead.

[4] Chap. 14:9-12: “And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the Beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the Beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”

[5] Chap. 15:1-4: “And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last Plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the Beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest.”

[6] Chap. 16:1, 2: “And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth... And there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the Beast, and upon them which worshiped his image.”

Verses 10, 11: “And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the Beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.”

Verses 17-19: "And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so. great. And the great City was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give"unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath."

[7] Chap. 17:3: "So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a Woman set upon a scarlet colored Beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns."

Verses 7-11: "And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the Woman, and of the Beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. The Beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the Beast that was, and is not, and yet is. And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the Woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the Beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

[8] Chap 18:1-5: "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities."

[9] Chap. 19:1-3: "And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are His judgments: for

He hath judged the great Whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.”

Verses 19-21: “And I saw the Beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army. And the Beast was taken, and with him the False Prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the Beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.”

[10] Chap. 20:4: “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the Beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”

Verse 10: “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the Beast and the False Prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”

VIII. These Visions Fall Into Three Divisions

The visions contained in these ten successive chapters fall into three divisions, connected with the three great stages in the history of the Empire.

[1] The visions relating to the Empire of Rome under the dominion of its crowned heads.

This includes the description of the draconic power and of its persecuting action in chap. 12; and also the period referred to in the interpretation of the heads of the Wild Beast in chap. 17: “five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.” It is clear from this interpretation of the angel in chap. 17 that the Wild Beast or Roman Empire was under the dominion of its sixth head in the time of St. John. Three notes of time relating to the past, the present, and the future occur in the explanatory words of the angel. He declares that

at the date when the Apocalypse was revealed to John five of the successive heads of the Wild Beast power were past, the sixth was in existence, the seventh was in the future. What was the form of government of the Roman Empire in the time of the Apostle? Evidently the rule of its heathen emperors. This, then, is represented by the sixth head of the Wild Beast.

[2] The vision: relating to the Roman Empire under the dominion of its ten horns and revived eighth head.

This includes the vision of the Woman in the wilderness hidden from the persecuting Dragon during $3\frac{1}{2}$ times or 1,260 days (chap. 12); that of the two witnesses who prophesy in sackcloth for 1,260 days and are slain by the Wild Beast from the abyss, and of the treading down of the outer court of the temple for 42 months (chap. 11); and that of the persecuting action of the Wild Beast under its revived eighth head during 42 months (chap. 13)

The connection of these visions is evident from the equality of their times, for 1,260 days are 42 months, and 42 months are $3\frac{1}{2}$ times or prophetic years; and also from the fact that these equal times are reckoned from the same general period or era, and extend to the same termination. Thus the times of the Beast (chap. 13) and of the witnesses are equal (1,260 days or 42 months), and finish together at the end of the sixth trumpet. The seventh trumpet brings the ruin of the Beast. The times of the Beast (42 months) and of the Woman dwelling in the wilderness (1,260 days or $3\frac{1}{2}$ times, chap. 12) are equal, and begin at the same point of time — viz. the conquest of the Dragon, and his being cast down to the earth (chaps. 12, 13) It is on the casting down of the Dragon that the Woman flies from his persecuting action to the wilderness (chap. 12), and it is after being thus cast down that the Wild Beast rises again through the healing of its deadly wound, and persecutes the saints (chap. 13) The starting point in each case is the same. In a word, the periods of 1,260 days, 42 months, or $3\frac{1}{2}$ “times” — relating to

- 1. The Woman remaining in the wilderness (chap. 12),
- 2. The seven-headed Beast restored (chap. 13),
- 3. The outer court trodden under foot by the Gentiles (chap. 11),
- 4. The witnesses prophesying in sackcloth (chap. 11) —

are equal, and commence or terminate with the same events. The visions in which they occur must consequently belong to one and the same general period in the history of the Roman Empire — the period of the Empire in its revived ten-horned state (chap. 13). This conclusion groups together the visions in chaps. 10-14, as relating to the same historic period — the period of the restored or Papal Roman Empire.

[3] The visions relating to the Roman Empire at the close of its ten-horned state under the dominion of the Harlot “Babylon,” and especially to the crisis of the casting of and destruction of the Harlot by the ten-horned Beast which had carried her. The section containing these includes six chapters (chaps. 15-20). The entire group of prophecies in chaps. 15-19 relates to the overthrow and destruction of “Babylon” and the “Beast” under the seven vials of God’s wrath, while the reference to the latter in chap. 20 is similar in its judicial character. The judgment of the apostate and persecuting politico-ecclesiastic power which has arisen in the sphere of the Roman Empire is the subject of these extended, and important prophecies.

IX. Connected and Orderly Whole

The seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials of the apocalyptic prophecy form a connected and orderly whole; the seven trumpets falling under the seventh seal, and the seven vials under the seventh trumpet. As the terminal trumpets and seven vials belong to the story of the ten-horned Wild Beast, the earlier trumpets and the seals must relate to the history of the same power.

Connection Of The Wild Beast Power With The Order Of The Trumpets And Vials

[1] The slaughter of the witnesses by the Wild Beast power takes place at the close of the sixth trumpet.

The following points should be noted in this relation: —

[a] The three woes are those of the three last trumpets: “I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!” (8:13).

[b] In chap. 9, after the fifth trumpet has sounded, we read: “One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter” (ver. 12).

[c] The sixth trumpet then sounds; and at the close of its events, when the persecuting action of the Wild Beast power and the death and resurrection of the witnesses have been accomplished, we read: “The second woe is past;_ and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly” (11:14).

The slaughter of the “witnesses” under the sixth trumpet precedes the destruction of the “Beast” under the seventh.

[2] The “Beast” and “Babylon” come to their end under the seven vials.

The seven vials are called “the seven last plagues,” for in them “is filled up the wrath of God” (15:1). The seventh vial occupies a terminal position in relation to premillennial judgments. On its being poured out the impressive declaration is made: “It is done.” The connection of these vials with the destruction of the “Beast” and “Babylon” is plain and important. The first vial is poured on the worshippers of the “Beast”; the fifth vial is poured on the seat of the “Beast”; while “Babylon” is utterly destroyed under the seventh vial, and together with it the Beast and the False Prophet.

[3] The seven trumpets are successive.

Their chronological order is evident and undisputed. Hence as the sixth and seventh trumpets belong to the times of the Wild Beast power, the earlier trumpets must refer to previous stages of the same.

Connection Of The Trumpets And Seals

The seventh seal is the seal of trumpets.

On the opening of this seal the seven angels of the seven trumpets go forth and sound the trumpets (chap. 8).

Hence the seals, trumpets, and vials unfold one and the same historical order — the order of events connected with the history of the Roman Empire and Christian Church.

Interpreted Vision In Chapter 17. The Rosetta Stone For Deciphering The Apocalypse.

The interpreted vision of the Woman and the Beast that carrieth her in Rev. 17 may be described as the Rosetta Stone which guides us to the meaning of the mysterious symbols of the Apocalypse.

“For many ages the meaning of the Egyptian hieroglyphics was entirely unknown. Thousands of conjectures had been made as to the method of reading those symbols; vast ingenuity had been exhausted; the hope was sometimes entertained that the clue had been discovered, but it was at last felt that all those proposed methods were, fanciful, and the world had settled down in despair as to the possibility of deciphering their meaning. The accidental discovery of the Rosetta Stone, and the patient labors of De Sacy, Akerblad, Tychsen, and especially of Champollion, have changed the views of the world on that subject, and the hieroglyphics of Egypt have become as intelligible as any other language.”

The divine explanation of the most central symbolical vision in the Apocalypse is the key to the meaning of the entire prophecy, and the interpretation thus given links the apocalyptic prophecy with the history of the Roman Empire and that of the Christian Church. The important position thus assigned to the Roman Empire in prophecy is fully justified by the place which it occupies in history, and especially by its relation to the Kingdom of God. What that relation is we have now in conclusion to consider.

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1. *The Church and the Churches; or, The Papacy and the Temporal Power*, by Dr. Döllinger, p. 42.↩
 2. *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chap. xlv.↩
 3. Hallam, *History of the Middle Ages*, p. 368.↩
 4. Elliott, *Horae Apocolypticae*, vol. iii. p. 92.↩
 5. *On the Resurrection*, chaps. xxiv., xxv.↩
 6. *Temporal Power of the Popes*, p. xlii, published first in 1860, ten years before the fall of the papal temporal power.↩

6. The Two Last Kingdoms Of Prophecy, Or The Relation Of The Roman Empire To The Kingdom Of God

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN is represented in the visions of Daniel as the fifth kingdom in a series of five kingdoms, of which the Roman is the fourth.

“It pleased God to order it in His providence,” says Jonathan Edwards, “that earthly power and dominion should be raised to its greatest height, and appear in its utmost glory, in those four great monarchies that succeeded one another, and that every one should be greater and more glorious than the preceding, before He set up the Kingdom of His Son. By this it appeared how much more glorious His spiritual Kingdom was than the most glorious temporal kingdom. The strength and glory of Satan’s kingdom in those four mighty monarchies appeared in its greatest height; for, being the monarchies of the heathen world, the strength of them was the strength of Satan’s kingdom. God suffered Satan’s kingdom to rise to so great a height of power and magnificence before His Son came to overthrow it, in order to prepare the way for the more glorious triumph of His Son. Goliath must have on all sides his splendid armor, when the stripling David comes against him with a sling and a stone, for the greater glory of David’s victory. God suffered one of those great monarchies to subdue another, and erect itself on the other’s ruins, appearing still in greater strength, and the last to be strongest and mightiest of all: that so Christ, in overthrowing that, might as it were overthrow them all at once.”¹

The Roman Empire was great in itself, but is greatest in its historic connection with the Kingdom of God.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, who was born under the Roman Emperor Augustus Caesar and crucified under Tiberius, was the Founder and Legislator of

the Kingdom of Heaven. Unlike the external, national, and temporal Kingdom of God, or Theocracy, founded by Moses, the Kingdom founded by Christ is spiritual, universal, and everlasting. It is the Kingdom foretold in the Prophets, and especially in the Book of Daniel, as “the Kingdom of the God of heaven,” which exists at first as “a Stone” “cut out without hands,” and finally becomes “a great Mountain” and fills the whole earth.

In His discourses our Lord unfolded authoritatively the laws of the Kingdom of Heaven, described the character of its subjects, traced its history, and foretold its destiny. Half the parables He uttered relate to this Kingdom. He describes in them the mode in which His Kingdom is founded, grows, is corrupted, and is finally purified and perfected. In the Gospel of Matthew the Sermon on the Mount (chaps. 5-7), the seven parables (chap. 13), and the prophetic discourse (chaps. 24, 25) all relate to the Kingdom of Heaven.

But our Lord did more than describe His Kingdom: He actually founded it. He built up by the preaching of truth, by the power of love, and by the operation of spiritual life a Kingdom not of this world — a Kingdom whose seat is within the human heart, whose subjects are the repentant and the renewed, and whose character, like that of the rule of the unfallen inhabitants of heaven, exhibits the blending of holiness and happiness under influences directly and absolutely divine, as a Kingdom of “righteousness; peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Rom. 14:17).

The Kingdom of Heaven is doubly contrasted with: (1) earthly kingdoms, such as those of Greece and Rome, founded by the sword, and wielding only an external transitory control over the acts of men; and (2) the Jewish theocracy, which was a divine kingdom aiming to control the thoughts and affections as well as the acts of its subjects, by the instrumentality of an external righteous law; for the sphere of Christ’s Kingdom is chiefly the heart, and the force by which it is founded and governed is altogether spiritual, gracious, and divine. “The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” Sheathing the sword of force, and silencing the thunder of law, Christ spoke persuasively to the heart in the gentle utterances of the Gospel. In the conflict with darkness His weapon was light; in the conflict with hatred it was love. He overcame evil with good, according to the method described in His memorable utterance: “I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.” It was by living and dying for the world that He conquered it.

The Kingdom of God thus “founded in the hearts of men, and thence developing itself outwards, is destined to bring under its control all that belongs to man.” And further, “the Kingdom of God, according to the comprehensive views of Christianity, is represented not merely as the common vitalizing principle of the human race, but as a bond by which mankind are united with all the orders of beings in a higher spiritual world, in one divine community.”² Christ in making peace has not only united man to God and man to his fellow-man, but heaven to earth, bringing all things into one divine kingdom (Col. 1:20).

In the parables and prophecies relating to the Kingdom of God two stages of its existence are broadly distinguished: first, a preparatory; and, secondly, a final stage. It is in the former that the history of the Kingdom of God is closely connected with that of the Roman Empire. Founded at the time when the Roman Empire had attained its greatest dominion and prosperity, the Kingdom of Heaven entered on its existence as an obscure and feeble society, threatened with destruction by the powers with which it was surrounded. The death of its Founder was accomplished at the instigation of the Jews by Roman hands, and the first ten persecutions of the Christian Church, under which it was all but annihilated, were deliberately carried out by the laws and forces of the Roman Government. Later persecutions of a more prolonged and terrible character have been carried on against the faithful followers of Christ by the same Government in its nominally Christian but actually apostate form — persecutions which succeeded for a time in silencing all testimony to the Gospel by the slaughter of the Christian Witnesses. The Apocalypse is the prophetic story of this twofold conflict With the powers of Paganism and Apostate Christianity. It is the figurative portrayal of the varying stages and results of that warfare in which the strength of mental conviction manifested in the faithful witnesses of Christ has triumphed over the might of that majestic Empire which of old subdued the nations and trod them under its feet.

Perhaps the truest idea which we can obtain of the relation of the Roman Empire to the Christian Church is that yielded by Old Testament analogy. The history of the Jewish people from the call of Abraham to the destruction of Jerusalem is plainly analogous with the history of the Christian Church. Hence what Egypt, Canaan, and Babylon were in relation to Israel, that the Roman Empire in its Pagan and Papal forms has been to the Church. Egypt, Canaan, and Babylon were the external spheres in which the

Jewish people existed at successive stages of their history, and the Roman Empire has for nineteen centuries been the chief outward sphere of the life and development of the Church of Christ. Egypt was to Israel a furnace of trial, Canaan an inheritance and scene of apostasy, and Babylon a place of captivity; and the Roman Empire has been all these to the Christian Church. It is not too much to say that the history of Rome is the history of the Church. From this it follows that Rome must occupy a central and commanding position in any comprehensive prophecy of the course of Christian history. Now the Apocalypse is this. Hence the position which the story of the Roman Empire occupies in the Apocalypse is abundantly justified. It follows that to understand the Apocalypse a knowledge of the history of the Roman Empire is necessary, and such a work as Gibbon's history of its decline and fall of the highest value.

Lastly, it is important to observe that as the history of the Jewish people corresponds with the history of the Christian Church, so the Book of Revelation as a prophecy of Christian history "corresponds in its office with the collective prophecies from Abraham to Malachi."³ Looked at 'in this comprehensive way, the Apocalypse "may be considered as a Prophet continued in the Church of God, uttering predictions which have their successive fulfillments as ages roll on; and thus it stands in the Christian Church in the place of a succession of prophets in the Jewish nation. And by this especial economy Prophecy is still continued, is always speaking, and yet a succession of prophets rendered unnecessary."⁴

1. *Works*, ii. 562↩

2. Neander, *Planting of Christianity*, i. 503.↩

3. Birks' *Elements of Prophecy*, p. 267.↩

4. Dr. Clarke in *Habershon on Prophecy*, Intro.↩

Diagram Of Professor Gausсен

[The diagram is missing from the source volume. Only the below description remains. Nevertheless this does provide value and so is included here. —Ed]

The annexed diagram is a copy of Professor Gausсен’s “fivefold historical and prophetical chart, showing the chronological tables of Ptolemy and Las Casas in two columns, and the prophetical visions of Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel, and John in three corresponding columns.”

It will be seen at a glance that the chart is founded on the unquestionable order of history, chronology, and prophecy. The four great empires of prophecy plainly agree with the four great empires of history. Their number is the same, their order is the same; they have the same commencing-point, and the same course, character, and termination. The first kingdom of Ptolemy and Daniel is the Babylonian, the second the Medo-Persian, the third the Grecian, the fourth the Roman. Daniel doubly represents these four empires (1) by four distinct metallic parts of a single Image, (2) by four successive Wild Beasts. The fourth kingdom of Daniel reappears three times in the Apocalypse of John, while the fifth kingdom of Daniel, the eternal kingdom of the God of heaven, is the terminal kingdom of the Apocalypse. The kingdom of the Mountain in Dan. 2, represented as the kingdom of the Son of Man and of the saints in Dan. 7, is identical with the kingdom of Christ and the saints in Rev. 20-22. These identifications of the five kingdoms rest on divinely given interpretations of the symbolic visions by which they are portrayed.

Further, the three great visions of the fourth empire in the Apocalypse represent successive stages in its history. The first of these represents the Roman Empire under the regnancy of its crowned Heads; the second under the regnancy of its crowned Horns; the third as carrying the Harlot Babylon, whom it subsequently casts off and destroys. These three great visions in Rev. 12, 13, and 17 are closely linked with all the remaining visions in the Apocalypse. Their divinely interpreted connection with the history of the

Roman Empire is the key to the entire prophecy. The Harlot seated on the Wild Beast is Papal Rome; from this interpretation of its central vision follows the interpretation of the whole Apocalypse. History confirms and illustrates What prophecy foretells.

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